

## THOMAS WELCH

The Walsh family of Norfolk County is an off-shoot of one of the old noble families of Wales, and was originally written Welch.

In 1740 Francis Welch emigrated to America settling in Philadelphia where he married the daughter of his Quaker employer. He was engaged in mercantile marine service during the Seven Year's War, was captured and taken to a French Port from which he escaped to England.

Thomas, eldest son of Francis Welch, was born on November 5th, 1742. He married Mary Mitchell, who was born April 8th, 1752, and died June 19th, 1817. During the Seven Year's War he volunteered in the land forces, and when Peace was restored he became a surveyor of lands in Pennsylvania, afterwards removing to Maryland where he was engaged in surveying when the Revolutionary War broke out. He refused a Colonelcy in the American Army, and joined the Loyalist Army, receiving the appointment of Quartermaster of the Maryland Loyalists on Oct. 17th, 1778. This Commission bears the signature of General Sir Henry Clinton, "Commander-in-Chief of His Majesty's Forces within the colonies lying on the Atlantic Ocean, from Nova Scotia to West Florida." He acted as Engineer with General Durnford in Florida when he was captured by the Spaniards. At the close of the war he was employed to survey lands for the U. E. Loyalists in New Brunswick. He returned to Maryland for a short time, then removed to Upper Canada with his second wife and two sons, Francis Leigh and Aquila Mitchell.

On landing at Kingston on November 2nd, 1793, he only remained there a short time, removing to what was known as the Sugar Loaf on Chippewa Creek, Welland County. When residing there he made the following surveys for the Provincial Government:

- In 1794 Townships of Wainfleet, Humberstone, Thorold, Pelham and front of Castor.
- In 1795 the remaining parts of Crowland, Willoughby, Walsingham and Charlotteville.
- In 1796 he completed the boundary survey of six Nation lands on Grand River. Made surveys in Walsingham, Charlotteville, Woodhouse, Walpole and Rainham.
- In 1796 he removed to Long Point settlement where he located on lot No. 12 in the 5th concession of Charlotteville. In this year he was appointed Registrar of Deeds for Norfolk County, which then included the Town-

ships of Walpole and Rainham in addition to its present territory. Subsequently he filled other offices, and in 1810 became Judge of the District and Surrogate Courts.

In 1798 he made a survey of Town Plot of Turkey Point.

He died on November 5th, 1816, and was buried in the family plot on the old homestead with his wife.

His eldest son, Francis Leigh, who was born March 12th, 1789, succeeded his father as Registrar at the age of 21 years, which office he continued to fill until his death on August 14th, 1884.

He was on active Military Service in 1812-14 and took part in the Battle of Lundy's Lane, and in other engagements. When pensions were granted to the veterans of the war he declined, stating that it was honor enough for him to have served his country and to have had his service recognized, and preferred that his share should go to those not more entitled to it, but who might be more in need of it.

It is reported that he built the first fire proof vault for records, and introduced in the Registry Offices the system of keeping separate books for the Townships.

The chirography of Francis L. Walsh was remarkable. When an octogenarian he wrote the Lord's Prayer, the words, "God Save the Queen," his name and the date on a circular space covered by a five-cent piece, which marvellous feat he executed without the aid of magnifying glasses. From 1821 to 1828, and again from 1835 to 1836, he represented Norfolk in the Provincial Parliament.

The family of Francis L. resided originally on Lot 12, Con. 3, Charlotteville, afterwards removing to Vittoria, about seven miles south-west of Simcoe.

Francis L. Walsh married Elsie Fairchild, daughter of Noah Fairchild. They had five sons, Thomas William, Aquila, Walter, Lewis Francis, and Christopher Leigh, also six daughters.

Aquila Mitchell, the younger son of Thomas Welch, Sr., born in Maryland, April 21st, 1791, married Margaret McCall, daughter of Duncan McCall, and succeeded his father on the homestead. There were three sons, Duncan, Thomas and Francis, also two daughters. Aquila died on May 3rd, 1873, and was buried in the family plot.

It might also be stated here that there is a Post Office called Walsh, near where Thomas Welch first settled, also, a station on the Simcoe and Port Rowan Branch of the G.T.R., ten miles from Simcoe called Walsh, the station being about two miles south of the old homestead of Thomas Welch.

(It is to be regretted that a portrait could not be secured of Thomas Welch).